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## NSW health system a top performer internationally despite high complication rates

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) today published two reports that for the first time reveal how well the NSW healthcare system is accommodating the needs of NSW's fastest-growing population group and largest consumers of healthcare services: people aged 55 and over.

BHI's fifth annual performance report *Healthcare in Focus 2014* and *Insights: Healthcare performance across the life span* show that overall, NSW is performing well in providing healthcare to its ageing population when compared with Australia and 10 other countries, including the UK, the US and France.

BHI Chief Executive, Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque said the reports draw on both national and international data to show NSW is leading the way internationally in the provision of some preventive health services.

"NSW outperformed most comparator countries on these measures, with over half of NSW adults aged 55 and over reporting that a health professional discussed diet, exercise and stress with them," he said.

"For those who were hospitalised overnight, nine in 10 said the hospital made arrangements for their follow-up care upon discharge — a better result than seven comparator countries."

Other areas where NSW performs well include:

- Relatively few people visited an emergency department for a condition that could have been treated by a GP
- People aged 55+ years with a chronic condition were more likely to say that a health professional gave them a written management plan and made contact between appointments to check on their condition than in eight of the 11 countries surveyed

Potential areas for improvement include:

- NSW had the highest rates of some post-surgical complications including deep vein thrombosis and blood poisoning of any country surveyed
- Only 70% of hip fracture surgeries were performed within the recommended timeframe of two days — just one country had a poorer result
- People diagnosed with knee osteoarthritis comprised half of all arthroscopies performed in 2013, despite there being little evidence that this procedure improves function or pain for these patients
- One in 10 NSW adults surveyed said a doctor had ordered an unnecessary test in the past two years.

BHI's *Insights* report delves deeper, showing how people aged 55+ use and experience health services.

It found that people aged 65–74 years were more positive about care they received in hospital, whereas those aged 75+ reflected more positively on interactions with their GP. People in the 55–64 year group were significantly less positive about their experiences in NSW emergency departments.

"People aged 75 and over were much more likely to visit an emergency department and be admitted to hospital — and once admitted, they collectively used more bed days," Dr Levesque said.

"Despite this, less than half of people aged 75 and over who died in 2013 actually died in hospital."

The full reports are available at [www.bhi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au)